

## REMARKS

*1. Status of claims*

After entry of the above amendment, claims 1-8, 10-17, 19-21, 23-30, 35-42, and 45-49 are pending and under consideration. Applicants also submit claims 31-34 are pending but were withdrawn as being directed to a non-elected claim; see Papers Nos. 7 and 11, dated August 14, 2002 and March 26, 2003, further to the Election Requirement (Paper No. 5) dated May 2, 2002. The independent claim from which these claims depend was found allowable in the original prosecution and these claims were reinstated upon allowance. Although these claims were not considered in the most recently received Office Action, Applicants submit that by the above amendment these claims are allowable as being dependent upon an allowable claim and respectfully request that they be considered.

*2. Support for amendment*

Claims 1, 14, and 40 are amended to incorporate limitations previously recited by claims 9, 22, and 44, which are canceled as now being redundant. Claim 36 is also amended to incorporate the same limitation. Claims 10 and 23 are amended to correct their dependencies from claims that are now canceled. No new matter has been added by this amendment.

*3. Claim objections*

The Examiner objected to claims 9-11, 20-24, 26, and 44 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form. By the above amendment, Applicants have followed the Examiner's suggestion, and submit this amendment overcomes the objection.

4. *Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102*

Claims 1-8, 12-17, 19, 25, 27-30, 35-42, and 45-49 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Frandsen et al., WO 91/18039 ("Frandsen"). Applicants point to the above amendments of the independent claims 1, 14, 36, and 40, in light of the Examiner's comments at p. 2 of the detailed action, in response to this rejection.

In the detailed action, the Examiner indicated claims 9-11, 20-24, 26, and 44 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. By the above amendment, independent claims 1, 14, 36, and 40 incorporate the limitations of claim 9, etc. Applicants submit Frandsen does not teach all the elements of all pending claims, as amended, and thus cannot anticipate them. Therefore, Applicants request this rejection of 1-8, 12-17, 19, 25, 27-30, 35-42, and 45-49 be withdrawn.

5. *Conclusion*

Applicants submit all pending claims 1-8, 10-17, 19-21, 23-42, and 45-49 are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned patent agent at (713) 934-4065 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAMS, MORGAN & AMERSON, P.C.  
CUSTOMER NO. 37774



March 8, 2004

Raymund F. Eich, Ph.D.  
Reg. No. 42,508  
10333 Richmond, Suite 1100  
Houston, Texas 77042  
(713) 934-4065  
(713) 934-7011 (fax)

AGENT FOR APPLICANTS